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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS) Learning the basic skills of reading and writing is not sufficient for a high school education. All students should comprehend, and react critically to, the ideas and problems about which they read. Students who were considered mature readers could distinguish fact from opinion, distinguish between connotative and denotative language, and draw inferences from and judge the validity of the ideas presented.

The best sources of material to develop critical reading skills were judged to be newspaper and magazine articles which reflect the role of language in forming opinion, creating misunderstandings, and accentuating differences.

The first step in teaching critical reading skills starts with word meanings. To develop such skills, students may each describe the same photograph and discuss how their descriptions differ from one another. The second step connects language and reality, reacting to words as symbols for things and ideas.

The third step distinguishes between referential and non-referential, descriptive and emotive language. A suggested activity was to indicate whether certain words had favorable or unfavorable connotations.

The fourth step was to recognize the writer's and the reader's purposes. An activity that could develop this skill would be to find examples of material written in different language styles for different audiences, but with essentially the same purpose. The fifth step was to distinguish among facts, judgments, inferences, and normative statements. For example, a copy of a political speech could be tallied for the number of judgments and observations it contains. The seventh step, the use of metaphors, could be emphasized by writing out the images evoked by metaphors and comparing individual responses. The eighth step, critical reading, was the comprehension of what was read in order to draw conclusions.

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Portland Public Schools
Portland, Oregon

LITERACY IS NOT ENOUGH

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Portland High School Curriculum Study 1961 - 1962

For Grades 9 - 12

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LITERACY IS NOT ENOUGH

It would be fatal to assume that the general student needs only to comprehend the written word, to fill out forms legibly, learn to spell common words, follow directions, etc. All students need to comprehend and to react critically to the ideas and problems about which they read. The non-academic student is capable of mature thinking. He is expected to solve problems after assessing the data, make choices based on competing ideas, and participate fully in the democratic society for which he is presumably being educated. When he can master the literal sense of what he is expected to read, he must be trained to apply mature thinking skills to his reading tasks.

An important function of every teacher is to provide opportunities to develop and strengthen these thinking skills. The English teacher's role is perhaps most crucial, for he deals with the tool for thinking, language. Maturity in reading is a facet of the maturity in the use of language which the English teacher aims to develop.

What is a Mature Reader?

He is one who

- can deal skillfully with increasingly higher levels of abstraction
- suspends judgement until "all" the facts are in
- distinguishes fact from opinion
- distinguishes between connotative and denotative language
- draws inferences from and judges the validity of the ideas presented

recognizes the author's intention(s)

- compares the views of different authors
- senses underlying assumptions
- makes judgments concerning the quality, the effectiveness, or the completeness of what is read
- draws analogies
- recognizes common fallacies in thinking, particularly those stemming from two-valued orientation
- goes beyond specific facts to make use of past experiences and relational thinking in arriving at an interpretation
- applies the ideas gained from reading to new situations
- applies the material read in the solution of problems

Translating some of these objectives to specific tasks we would expect, among other things, that a mature reader will be able to arrive at a decision about a candidate or a political issue after reading conflicting opinions; make an intelligent choice about which product to buy after reading the claims of the sellers; on the basis of his experience and what he has heard and read, develop a frame of values and within that framework decide upon courses of action which will benefit himself his family, his community.

A Program for Developing Mature Readers

Rationale

The following suggestions for developing reading skills beyond the literal or comprehension level follow a logical rather than a psychological sequence - beginning with the smallest unit of meaning, the word, and then moving to the concept, the relationship, and the larger thought sequence embodied in essays and reports.

Until we discover more about the language learning process, this sequence might serve as convenient a frame of reference as any. The

sequence is one which might be followed during the course of a unit, a year, or a four-year program. Until developmental reading programs become mandatory in the general education program in the high school, there is little danger of duplication. In any event, as with the basic skills of word recognition and comprehension, the application to increasingly mature materials reinforces earlier learnings and develops new facets of the same skills.

The suggested activities that follow indicate how the teacher may involve students in observing their own and others' reactions to the printed page and in developing insight into language which should make them more discriminating readers.

Since organized texts for teaching critical reading skills are generally lacking on the secondary level, a good deal of the burden of planning experiences falls on the teachers. Probably the best sources of material are newspapers and magazines; articles which clearly reflect the role of language in forming opinion, creating misunderstanding, and accentuating differences should be sought.

- Advertising copy is an obvious place to begin.
- "Dear Abby" and letters to the editor on current controversies, especially on the local level, are close to home, highly motivational grist for the mill.
- Reports of the varying views of representatives at international parleys call for all of the skills of language analysis.

Concentrate on the communication problems created by the nature of the language, rather than on the social, political and personal problems themselves. Avoid the temptation to rely on subject-matter texts in the

social studies. Although language can't be separated from content, the English teacher too frequently is diverted from focusing on his responsibility for teaching language and literature by having his students concentrate on the retention of other subject matter in their reading, writing, and reporting activities in the English class. Materials in the following texts serve as useful sources for ideas and exercises:

Altick, Richard. Preface to Critical Reading. Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1960

Hayakawa, S. I. Language in Thought and Action. Harcourt, Brace, 1949

Minteer, Catherine. Words and What They Do To You. Row, Peterson, 1953.

Thomas, Cleveland A. Language Power for Youth. Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955.

I. The Word

A. Students need to explore how individuals get meanings for words--how direct experience, perceptions based upon emotional and other needs, and perceptions based upon what others suggest we perceive give us meanings for words which may be different from the meanings they have for others with different experience and backgrounds.

Suggested Activities

Start with observation.

1. Students might all describe, in writing, the same photograph or a shared experience; the descriptions vary. Students make some inductive observations on why we perceive differently and why we use different language to describe what we perceive.

2. They read the same selection and write individual interpretations of it. Students analyze the reasons for their varying interpretations.

3. They find examples of differing newspaper reports of the same

event, and try to account for the differences.

4. They observe that the meaning of a word depends on its verbal context. They find examples of the same word in varying contexts.

I like fish.
He caught a fish.
The poor fish.
to fish for compliments.

5. They observe that the same word in a given context has different meanings (connotations) for each reader.

"American schools are run in a democratic fashion."

What is the meaning of democratic for a parent, a teacher, a Chinese communist, an American ambassador, a straight A student, a failing student, etc.? Have every student in the class explain what it means to him. Students may realize that meanings are not in objects or ideas but in people--in the way they respond to ideas, in the way they are conditioned to respond to them.

II. Language and Reality

The mature reader reacts to words as symbols for things and ideas, and not as the things themselves. The existence of a word is not evidence of a corresponding reality. Words may be used to misrepresent actual circumstances in the non-verbal world, or they may be used without representing any object or sensation at all. Instead of asking what an object is, the reader might ask, "What is its name?" Without checking against one's experience with the physical world, and with the ideas of others, it is impossible by merely looking at statements to know whether they represent actual objects in the world of happenings.

Awareness of the symbolic process becomes increasingly necessary as the reader deals with higher order abstractions, with more complex ideas,

with finer shades of meaning. He needs to learn that language cannot represent all of experience and that things having the same names are not identical. He needs to reconstruct the facts represented by the words. Our language structure, which suggests linear cause-and-effect relationships and tends to separate phenomena into classes, does not correspond with the changing nature of the world of complex relationships. Students can counteract the elementalistic, non-relational, two-valued aspects of language by:

(1) reading the predicate "is" (Helen is beautiful) as "appeared." The "is" of predication suggests that characteristics are in things instead of in the author. The statement describes the author's feelings, not Helen. The syntactical structure, Noun-Verb-Adjective, tends to conceal rather than reveal this meaning relationship.

(2) reading the "is" of identification in the Noun-Verb-Noun structure as "may be classified as," to avoid the notion that two things are identical. "Man is an animal" should be interpreted as "Man may be classified as an animal."

(3) using the silent techniques of indexing and dating as reminders of the unique and changing meanings of words. America 1776 is not America 1962.

(4) keeping in mind the characteristics which are left out as we use increasingly abstract terms. In order to apply the term furniture to both chairs and tables we emphasize the similarities and ignore the differences. When we classify someone as a Negro we are emphasizing his similarity to other Negroes and leaving out individual characteristics.

Suggested Activities

1. Rearrange the items in each of the following groups according to levels of abstraction. What are some of the individual characteristics that

differentiate each individual or object from the group in which it has been placed? (Characteristics left out as we move up the abstraction ladder.) The first group has been arranged for you in ascending order of abstraction.

Mrs. Smith	wealth	sedan	student at North High
English teacher	livestock	Ford	teenager
educator	Bessie	vehicle	Robert Wilson
American	cow	automobile	sophomore
human being	farm property	transportation	minor

2. Check a story in the last issue of the school newspaper. Did it report all of the story? What details were left out? You all remembered some details which others didn't. Why?

3. Compare advertisements in magazines with advertisements of the same item in the Sears catalogue and both with the actual objects in order to test how exactly the advertisements describe the object and its functions and values. Start with the following example:

ANNOUNCING the completely new unabridged Merriam-Webster!
This is the English language as it is spoken and written today--a personal key to knowledge, enjoyment, and success for you and your family. This new dictionary brings you 100,000 new words or new meanings never before included in the unabridged Merriam-Webster. Every definition is given in a single flashing phrase of precise meaning. 200,000 usage examples demonstrate word meaning for full, clear, understanding. Over 450,000 entries; magnificent color illustrations. Here is the final language authority of our time. Only $47.50. Let us show you a copy of this remarkable book today. (advertisement)

Webster's Third New International Dictionary. Unabridged. 100,000 new words. 450,000 entries; pronunciations (new simplified key); definitions; revisions; synonyms; antonyms. Thousands of terms illustrated. 20 color plates. Thumb index. About 2,720 pages. 13 x 9 7/8 in. Postpaid. $47.50. (Montgomery-Ward Catalog)

A passell of double-domes at the G. & C. Merriam Company joint in Springfield, Mass. have been confabbing and yakking for twenty-seven years--which is not intended to infer that they have not been doing plenty work--and now they have finalized Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, a new edition of that swell and esteemed word book.
Those who regard the foregoing paragraph as acceptable English prose will find that the new Webster's is just the dictionary for them. (from a N. Y. Times editorial)

4. Distinguish among these meanings of "is"

Mr. Johnson is honest.
Business is business.
Sally is an accomplished musician.
All men are created equal.
Honesty is the best policy.
Jim is a nice guy.
This is a sheet of paper.
The sum of the interior angles of a triangle is 180°.
William Jones is a criminal.

5. In connection with the following, discuss the extent to which confusion between words and things can influence peoples' behavior.

(1) The Emperor's New Clothes

(2) Chapter One of Mama's Bank Account, in which Mama saves the family from worry with a nonexistent bank account

(3) Find some advertising copy which might lead readers to have false expectations about a product. (Example: "This lightning rod is fully guaranteed." Does this mean that if your house is struck by lightning the manufacturer will replace the house, or the rod?)

(4) "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

6. Why are encyclopedias and dictionaries edited and revised periodically? Is there a single definition for a word? Have the class give their meanings for a group of words and then compare them with those in various dictionaries. They should be able to arrive inductively at the concept of how words get meanings and how they are defined.

7. We classify for a purpose. The name of an object has no claim on its nature. Students should learn to regard classification as tentative and that no one of many possible kinds of classification is the most important.

(1) Examine passages to note the arbitrary nature of classification, and those in which meaning is changed by classification. (That was no lady, that was my wife.) Why is a person who is apprehended by the police classified as a Negro, a student, an ex-convict?

(2) How would you classify students if you were
a high school attendance officer
a school librarian
a P.E. teacher
the president of a student body, etc.

(3) Find examples of classification in written material. Analyze to determine the purpose, validity, and appropriateness of the classifications.

III. Distinguishing between referential and non-referential language

Students need constant reminders to regard words as symbols only and to seek the meanings for which they stand. They need to discriminate between referential and emotive language. Referential language refers to objects or actions or situations which can be pointed to or described and makes statements which may be verified or disproved. The language of science is primarily referential. Emotive language is used to express the writer's feelings and appeals to those of the reader, sometimes in order to stir him to action. It frequently employs words with strong connotations, a great deal of metaphor, and deliberate selectivity to make a point or achieve an effect. The reader needs to be particularly aware of the motives of the user of emotive language. Referential and emotive language, part of a continuum, are appropriate to different kinds of discourse--the former scientific, the latter literary, although one can't clearly separate either the subjects or the kinds of language employed. The student is not to be trained to be suspicious or disdainful of either referential or emotive language perse, but to distinguish between them and to evalute their appropriateness. Does highly emotive language serve the reader best in advertising or political speeches? Would a retelling of Macbeth in plain, factual prose, with all phenomena

explained scientifically, serve the writer's original intention and the reader's purpose?

The assessment of the author's craft, the universality and genuineness of the emotional appeal, the response to imaginative language, are some of the key appreciation skills developed in the literature program. Because the purposes and language of literary and non-literary materials (science, social science, exposition, argument, report, etc.) are so divergent, it is generally wise not to subject literary material to the kinds of analyses suggested in this portion of the supplement, just as we don't ordinarily apply the criteria of literary criticism to non-literary materials. The following sample exercises deal with non-literary materials. The reader's purpose calls not for the "willing suspension of disbelief" so necessary to experience with literature, but for the evaluation of what he reads in terms of its relation to actual objects and events in the physical world.

Suggested Activities

1. For each of the following words, indicate whether it has favorable or unfavorable connotations for you, or whether your reaction to it is emotionally neutral: socialism, discrimination, juvenile, unions, eggheads, hot rodders, cops, patriotism.

2. Assess the degree of charge in the following words. For whom are they loaded?

child, youngster, teen-ager, kid, juvenile, minor

mature, ripe, mellow, adult, grown-up, full-fledged

fat, obese, stout, plump, well-padded, overweight, thickset, corpulent, fleshy, full-blown, portly

old, senile, senior citizen, pensioner, retired

slim, slender, skinny, underweight, thin, lean slight, gaunt, spare, wiry

woman, lady, madam, female

talkative, articulate, wordy, gossipy, garrulous, rambling, glib, verbose, voluble, fluent, gabby, running off at the mouth

quiet, taciturn, uncommunicative, silent, tight-lipped, nonverbal, reserved, speechless, reticent, secretive, aloof

3. Pick out the loaded words in the following passages:

> How wonderful! It's Baby Week!
> Whether it be a shy, sweet smile, the upward reach of rosy arms or just a charming coo, a baby brightens our days...gives wings to our dreams. How wonderful to have a baby!
>
> How wonderful, too, to know that there are so many fine products designed especially for your baby's comfort, pleasure, and nutritional well-being. During Baby Week our "Little Girl Blue" in the picture will be beaming in stores all over the country to guide you to the many wonderful values your grocer provides for your baby....
>
> Among the wide variety of Gerber Strained and Junior Foods, you'll find High Meat Dinners featured...
>
> The President must rid himself of the radical economic theories of men who believe that present conditions are too sophisticated to allow for balanced budgets.....The President can have a new, enlightened and confident relationship with business--but only if he earns it.
>
> I believe the President made a grave mistake when he used the cocked and loaded pistol of government power on a single industry.

4. Indicate whether each statement below is a referential (informative) statement or an emotive appeal (expressing writer's feelings or appealing to feelings of reader).

> (1) A crab has ten feet, several pairs of strong jaws, and a stomach studded with hard projections that serve for grinding food.
>
> (2) Look like a champ--feel like a champ--be a champ, in a Champion Sportshirt.
>
> (3) It certainly was a rotten trick of his to doublecross me that way.

(4) Vegetables are prepared for the table chiefly by baking, boiling, steaming, or frying, though many varieties are eaten in raw state.

5. By pointing to specific phrases and sentences, analyze the various ways in which the author or speaker attempts to arouse the emotions of the listener or reader in a passage such as

(1) Mark Antony's funeral oration in Julius Caesar (effect on his audience)

(2) Paine's "The Crisis," the lines beginning, "These are the times that try men's souls..."

IV. Recognizing the writer's and the reader's purposes

Students must be trained to read with purpose. Unless the reader has clearly defined purposes, he will read in a disorganized, unresponsive fashion. Purpose in a two-way process. It is the goal of the writer and the reader, rather than a property of the message itself. Therefore, the reader needs to be aware of both his purpose and that of the writer. Effective communication of ideas demands similar thoughts in the minds of both writer and reader, not necessarily reflected by the use of similar language by both.

Suggested Activities

1. Which of these would most nearly indicate the writer's purpose in the following material, assuming they appear in a "usual" context? Match the letters to the numbered items.

a. to express feeling
b. to inform
c. to direct
d. to appeal to the imagination
e. to be sociable (small talk)
f. to persuade

(1) There are 1500 students enrolled in this school.

(2) Close the door.

(3) He's a stinker.

(4) Hi! How's it going?

(5) The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

(6) Listening to a Sonoramic Radio is a delightfully different experience.

Assuming varying contexts, what other purposes might each of these statements serve?

2. What could be the <u>effects</u> on the reader of the following statements? You might classify them as (a) emotional, (b) informative, (c) persuasive, (d) sociable, (e) esthetically pleasing or entertaining, or any combination of effects depending on the reader.

(1) "This new Smoothflow with free glide horsepower and fully automatic equipment costs only $8,995 delivered."

--effect on reader with income of $5,000 a year

--effect on reader with income of $50,000 a year

(2) Exult O shores and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

(3) Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of the United States, was assassinated five days after the end of the Civil War.

(4) A road sign reads: "clearance 11 feet."

--effect on passenger car driver

--effect on tired driver of 12-foot high truck, who has already had to detour around tow other underpasses

3. Find examples of material written on different levels of usage using different styles of language for different audiences, but with essentially the same purpose. Example: (1) election appeals for a particular

candidate addressed to: low-paid factory workers, intellectuals, ethnic, racial, or regional groups, farmers, housewives, etc. (2) advertising for a particular product in magazines aimed at different audiences (mass, class, special interest)

4. If you were to classify language as (1) that which informs, (2) that which directs or commands, and (3) that which judges or evaluates, in which of your reading tasks would each be most appropriate? Of course, all three kinds are constantly used in all kinds of reading matter, but to sharpen your awareness of purpose and appropriate language, think of the kinds of material which you read and list them under the one of these three kinds of language which you think would be most appropriate.

Informative 1	Directive 2	Evaluative 3
minutes of a meeting	fire drill instructions	newspaper editorial

5. Read two or more accounts of the same event. How and why do they differ? For whom were they written? For what purposes? What is the author's attidude toward (a) the reader and (b) the subject he has written about?

V. Distinguishing among facts, judgments, inferences, and normative statements

Statements of <u>fact</u> can be verified (The sun rose at 6:15.); <u>judgments</u> cannot (It is a beautiful day). An <u>inference</u> is a statement about the unknown made on the basis of the known (Fact: He pounded on the table. Inference: He was angry). A normative statement, a statement of what ought to be (All Americans are equal before the law) should not be confused with a fact. Sometimes a directive is issued as a normative statement. (A Boy Scout is clean, brave, and reverent.)

Suggested Activities

1. Label each of the following statements as fact, judgment, inference, or normative statement.

(1) I feel strong enough to tackle that job.

(2) Teenagers are poorer drivers than adults.

(3) Khrushchev predicts that agricultural output will double in the Soviet Union by 1973.

(4) If free elections were held in Communist countries there would be no more wars.

(5) The schools educate all Americans for full participation in the democratic process.

(6) The dog is man's best friend.

2. Examine the following: a newspaper report of a news event, an article in a weekly news magazine, an advertisement containing a long written message, a report of a science experiment in a textbook or a magazine, and a copy of a political speech. Make a tally of the number of judgments and observations in each. Not every sentence will be one or the other. Some will be neither. What tentative conclusions can you draw from this limited sampling? NOTE: Try this with only two obvious sources with slower classes. You might use or adapt an exercise in Hayakawa's Language in Thought and Action, pp. 51-52, which asks the reader to classify a number of statements as judgments, inferences, or reports. A sample analysis is included and a warning that a one-word answer will not ordinarily be adequate.

3. In the following paragraph, eliminate all statements which are not verifiable and copy out the factual parts of the passage. Compare the length of your paragraph with the original.

> John is a very bright boy who took a college prep course in high school. He was deservedly the receiver of the award for the outstanding student of his class and was offered a scholarship by one of the best private colleges. However, after graduation from high school,

he suddenly got lazy. He completely stopped reading, though in high school he had read hundreds of good books which were not required. He didn't smile or look worried when he told me that he had decided not to go to college at all, so I knew he wasn't joking and that he wasn't unhappy about his decision. This shows that some people who start with a great deal of ambition will lose it very quickly.

VI. Recognizing underlying assumptions

It is questionable whether any but the most able secondary students can benefit from intensive study of logical patterns, but all students do need to be concerned with the truth of the premise of an argument. In developing sensitivity to the subtleties of syntax and rhetoric, the student learns to recognize assumptions which are frequently obscured by the nature of our language patterns. Once he clearly recognizes assumptions, he is in a position to evaluate their truth and validity. Assumptions are frequently buried, sometimes not even stated. They are usually taken for granted. For example, an advertisement may offer an item at a discount. It assumes that the reader would like to save money. No problem there. But, "John smiled at me. He wants to be friendly." There may be a question about the unstated assumption that a smile is a friendly sign. "When did you stop beating your wife?" Questions, particularly, lend themselves to hidden assumptions. "What was the cause of the Civil War?"

Suggested Activities

1. Identify the unstated or hidden assumptions and evaluate them as reasonable, questionable, or unsound.

(1) Better pull over and let those teenage drivers pass you.

(2) The rumor of the secretary's resignation was confirmed in today's newspaper. (Assumption: newspaper report is correct.)

(3) Henry Jones is a success in business even though he didn't go to college.

(4) After the recent rash of hub cap thefts, police began

systematically examining students' cars at the local high school.

(5) The landlord didn't feel it was necessary to repaint the apartment because his next tenants would be Puerto Ricans.

(6) Although she's a straight "A" student, Sally Jones is the prettiest girl in her class.

(7) Who put the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder?

(8) Even though she's a woman, she did a good job.

2. Examine comparable amounts of copy in a sports column, the letters to the editor, and a news report in a newspaper, identifying and evaluating the assumptions. Is there any difference in the number and quality of the assumptions in the three?

3. Examining questions. Closely related to detecting and evaluating assumptions is recognizing the nature of questions. Students should learn to distinguish between real questions (What time is it?) and rhetorical questions (Wasn't that great?). Beyond this literal level, they need practice in differentiating among scientific, exploratory, and useless questions. Scientific questions ask about provable facts (What is the average per capita income tax?) Exploratory questions call for judgments, estimates, and beliefs (Will taxes continue to increase?). Useless questions cannot be answered because facts are not available or discoverable (Are taxes too high?).

Activity. Label each question S - scientific; E - exploratory; U - useless; R - rhetorical (assuming a usual context).

(1) Why don't you stop bothering me?

(2) How many boys tried out for football this year?

(3) What are our chances for a successful football season?

(4) Is homework necessary?

VII Metaphor

Methaphor should be taught as an integral aspect of language, the chief means by which words are given new meanings, and not merely as an ornament of poetry. It is very often the meaning itself, the only way of saying anything. Most things which we cannot point to in the immediate environment can be referred to only metaphorically. An awareness of the role of metaphor in language should aid students to distinguish between the literal and the metaphorical, a skill particularly needed as reading tasks become more complex in the secondary school. Even though a metaphor is stated simply, it poses serious comprehension problems for the unsophisticated reader who may lack both the background and the insight into language to reconstruct the experience which metaphor demands of the reader. Its multiplicity of meaning for writer and reader, its compactness, and its usually evocative quality make it both powerful and dangerous. The reader may assume that relationships exist which the writer does not mean to imply, or the reader may transfer his feelings for the primary referent to the actual referent. Students need practice in identifying, interpreting, and evaluating metaphor. They might begin with a recognition and analysis of the literal referent and go on to examine its relationship to what is being talked about. In examining a metaphor, they must ask themselves which elements have been selected for comparison and which have been left out. Students should also be able to judge the appropriateness of a metaphor in a given situation, and they should be able to assess its emotive elements.

Suggested Activities

1. Find metaphors in the following, trace them back to the literal referent, and analyze the common elements which aid in the understanding of the metaphorical referent. Example: Banks was the cog of the Chicago infield. Trace cog back to the cog in a machine to analyze Banks' relationship to the

infield.

Bruins Maul Beavers
Gridders Gird for Tilt
Trojan Pockets Crown
Pirates Shade Giants

U. S. Netter Snares Laurels
Beavers Tip Tribe
Southpaw Clobbers Apple
Out of Arena
Generals Bow to Senators

The champion unleashed a barrage of blows, blitzing the underdog in less than two circles by cracking his glass jaw.

Vikings Squash Bid to Join New Hoop Loop

Thus we keep clipping the wool from the goose that lays the golden egg until we pump her dry.

Fleet Kitty, the canine bunny chaser with the flying paws, churned 550 yards in 31:20 and skimmed across the wire with about a three length bulge over Ed's Silver Bunny. Pete's Pick uncorked a sizzling strech run to grab the show end. Last Look lead the pop-out parade, but D. D. Dinah slammed the door on the darling of the fans.

Our public schools have been spiritually denuded by the recent action of the Supreme Court.

I am appalled at the hysterical reaction to the Supreme Court's decision.

The motion picture is photographed in stark black-and-white that casts a pall of realistic tragedy. Steve McQueen is terrific as a busted sergeant who's still in there pitching grenades when the chips are down, and Bobby Darin, Fess Parker, and others back him up every hard-won inch of the way.

Regardless of the merit in any service, the government machine itself contains an invisible ax that automatically chops the taxpayers' dollars into dollarettes.

2. Find metaphors in sports reports, news columns, advertising, and other everyday reading matter. Restate them, telling how the literal and metaphorical referents are alike in some ways, but not in others.

3. Write out the images called up by metaphors. Compare individual responses.

4. Evaluate metaphors to show how glossing over of differences can be misleading. "He works like a horse." Does this mean that he works conscientiously, unthinkingly, uncomplainingly?

VIII Critical reading

There is no clear-cut definition of the term critical reading, but for instructional purposes the English teacher might consider it as going beyond literal comprehension of what is read in order to evaluate, organize, infer, and draw conclusions. In this sense, all of the material in this section can fit the definition. The English teacher customarily, however, concentrates his efforts on training students to

--recognize common fallacies in thinking

--evaluate the adequacy of general statements

--evaluate the dependability of data and the compentence of authorities.

Two-valued orientation. Perhaps the most pervasive fallacy in thinking is that based on two-valued orientation, the either-or, black-or-white, good guy-bad guy way of looking at life. At least part of this elementalistic way of thinking can be ascribed to our language, or labeling habits. We tend to respond favorably to all persons or events which are classified in one way and unfavorably to those classified in another. When a writer uses the "is" of identity, he is using language which is not similar to the structure of the world around us. It permits the reader to internalize the assumption that everything is either A or not A. "You are either for us or against us." "Either he is a criminal or he isn't."

Cause and effect. The assumption that "an" effect invariably follows "a" cause is another product of two-valued orientation stemming partly from assumptions implicit in the structure of our language. The verbal principle of same cause, same effect implies a two-term relation not found in the world of multi-causality. We know from modern science that the probability of any event being repeated in all its details is practically nil. Students need to be trained in an infinite-valued semantics of probability.

All events are related in a complex way, independent of our way of speaking about them.

General statements. To understand a generalization, the reader needs to be able to attach it to particulars. Consciousness of the abstraction process should develop in the reader a sensitivity to supporting details, to the scientific method of observing the facts before arriving at conclusions. When confronted with a general statement, the reader needs to judge if (1) there have been sufficient observations, (2) the evidence is representative, and (3) there are any exceptions. The form in which generalizations are stated frequently implies an "allness" which doesn't exist in reality. ("Women are better drivers than men." All? Some? Most? Lack of qualification implies "all" since the predicate structure suggests equality.)

Suggested Activities

1. Can you identify instances of two-valued orientation in any of the following? Look for basic assumptions of right or wrong, all or none, free or not free, control or no control, etc. In what ways does the grammatical structure of the sentence contribute to the apparent oversimplifications in thinking?

Either you're with us or your're against us.

Some of my best friends are ----------s.

You can always tell a Halo girl.

Mexicans are lazy, Italians crafty, Englishmen dull, Scotchmen stingy, French immoral, and Americans resourseful.

The management reserves the right to refuse service to anyone.

Minors are not permitted to loiter on these premises.

Next time take the train and relax.

The movie was better than the book because it had a happy ending.

The entire city of Moscow has only six service stations.

Private power companies pay taxes.

Why should the school year last only nine months? Could a firm stay in business if it closed its doors three months every year?

College A is better than College B because College A students dress like ladies and gentlemen and never put their feet on library tables.

Officers only.

Ladies.

The Day of Battle

Far I hear the bugle blow
To call me where I would not go,
And the guns begin the song,
"Soldier, fly or stay for long."

Comrad, if to turn and fly
Made a soldier never die,
Fly I would, for who would not?
'Tis sure no pleasure to be shot.

But since the man that runs away
Lives to die another day,
And cowards' funerals, when they come,
Are not wept so well at home,

Therefore, though the best is bad,
Stand and do the best, my lad:
Stand and fight and see your slain,
And take the bullet in your brain.

--A. E. Housman

2. Analyze the cause and effect relationships suggested by the following. List possible causes not mentioned.

The fuller the coffee can, the fuller the coffee flavor. Shake the can and see.

A twelve-month school year will keep kids off the street.

Relief comes naturally because only nature's ingredients are used in this tonic.

Wheaties is the breakfast of champions. I eat Wheaties. Therefore. . .

Reading evil books is dangerous because readers are likely to imitate evil actions of characters in these books.

Fluoride is rat poison. We do not want rat poison in our pure water.

Broken homes are the cause of juvenile delinquency.

To avoid foot cramps, flex your toes often. Seagulls flex their toes often, and who ever heard of a seagull with foot cramps?

A social studies course in American Problems leads students to believe that American is in trouble.

A couple of years in the Army will straighten that kid out.

You can't trust him--he has shifty eyes.

New Clairol Condition actually makes your hair feel stronger.

Gray hair, even when it's premature, says you're older than you are! So if you hate that gray, wash it away with Loving Care Hair Color Lotion. Makes you husband feel younger, too. . .just to look at you!

Are you just a whisper away from the full beauty of gray? Tecnique Silver-Tone dramatizes gray hair. Of course you love your gray! What's more attractive than naturally gray hair?

Be the one with beautiful legs. You can camouflage their shape with color. Use two shades of pancake-type makeup or liquid leg film. To make thighs and lower legs look slimmer, paint deeper shade on the outside and inside of legs. For shapelier ankles, blend darker color onto sides of ankles. Wherever there is any excess flesh, the darker color will "reduce" it. The reverse is true for too-thin legs. Build up meager calves. . .

Before he went back to Paris, Papa gave me a word of advice. "Gabrielle," he tells me, "never fall in love with a thin man. He will break your heart."

Come back to nature with Sunsweet prune juice--keeps you regular the way nature intended.

3. Find some statements of limited choice or single cause thinking in your in-school and out-of-school reading. You might start with school publications and posters.

4. Can you apply these tests to the following general statements? Follow this exercise by finding examples of generalizations which are well supported and those which are not.

a. Are there enough cases?

b. Are there any exceptions?

c. What are the motives of the writer?

They don't teach kids to read any more.

Nothing ever happens in Portland.

High school students are destroying bus interiors.

Every high school kid who goes by my house tosses garbage in my front yard.

Loafers and drinkers need not apply.

Women drivers are a highway menace.

Good is better than evil because it's nicer

Kids at Grant and Wilson are stuck up.

Your high school years are the best years of your life.

American morals would be improved if certain books and magazines were kept off the stands.

Strike while the iron is hot, but look before you leap.

Kids nowadays get into more trouble than they used to.

Almost any woman can be younger looking with mild Palmolive care.

Everything turns to richness when you stir in PET. . .the milk with twice the country cream in every drop.

A FINAL NOTE TO TEACHERS

These suggestions are only a beginning in the process of training students to apply mature thinking skills to their reading tasks. You are not training students merely to be skeptical of what they read. That's comparatively easy. Along with the science teacher, the social science teacher, and all of your colleagues you are trying to develop a thinking adult, one who observes, assesses, hypothesizes, arrivesat tentative conclusions, and revises his judgments in the light of new evidence. They key to understanding, to sharing of ideas, to formulating and applying ideas is language.

> "But today in addition to that neglect of thought there is also prevalent a mistrust of it. The organized political, social, and religious associations of our time are at work to induce the individual man not to arrive at his convictions by his own thinking, but to make his own such convictions as they keep ready made for him. Any man who thinks for himself and at the same time is spiritually free is to them something inconvenient and even uncanny. He does not offer sufficient guarantee that he will merge himself in their organization in the way they wish."
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> --Albert Schweitzer